

Spring picnic for Fletcher Jones gardens



The pristine Fletcher Jones gardens as they were in the 1960s (together with the blue buildings that we later painted white). Image: Weston Langford, via Save the Silver Ball and Fletchers Gardens.

[box type="bio"] **Fletcher Jones gardens spring picnic celebration is on Sunday, September 14, from 3pm-6pm, with the movie screenings from dusk.**[/box]

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] T [/dropcap>he Fletcher Jones gardens in Warrnambool will play host this month to a spring picnic, market and twilight film screening to celebrate the beginning of a new chapter for the much-loved landmark.

The arts collective, **The F Project**, which took its name from the late Sir Fletcher Jones, is the driving force behind the community event on **Sunday 14 September (3pm-6pm)**, having gained approval for it to go ahead from the site's new owner,

Dean Montgomery.

September 14 marks 70 years to the day since Fletcher Jones started his first company, FJ Trousers Pty Ltd, with the inaugural meeting of the board of directors. The Pleasant Hill site was bought three years later, when the company morphed into Fletcher Jones and Staff.

The day will include an afternoon picnic and high tea with food stalls and live music, together with a spring market featuring work by artists from The F Project.

Bluestone Magazine will have its very first market stall, with limited edition *Bluestone* tote bags for sale at \$10 each. We will also be selling copies of "Warrnambool – This is Home" and have a free car sticker for each person who drops by to say hello.

A twilight film screening is also planned, starting with *Last Man in the Ball*, a short film by **Julie Eagles/Colleen Hughson**, followed by the main feature of *Fabric of a Dream*, a 55-min documentary about the life of Fletcher Jones.



The annual Fletcher Jones Christmas parties were

legendary in the 1960s and 70s. A little of that feeling will be revived next month. Image: Courtesy of [Lost Warrnambool](#).

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] I [/dropcap]t will be the first time in many years that the Fletcher Jones gardens have been opened up for a large community event and taps into the history of the family Christmas parties held in the gardens each year during the 1960s and 70s.

The fact the event is being held at all is something of a minor miracle, given the bleak outlook for the property up [until its sale](#) to Mr Montgomery in May this year.

Since then, preliminary work has started on repairing the iconic silver ball water tower and re-roofing of the buildings and Mr Montgomery has indicated he plans to repaint and restore as much of the original garden furniture and features as possible.

An impromptu opening of the site a fortnight ago, including tours of the derelict factory and sandstone tunnels, gave some indication of how popular the factory remains with locals and ex-pats, with more than 100 people taking the opportunity to see inside.

Factory Arts – housed within the old building – will open their studios for the day to give visitors a glimpse of the changing tide within the complex. There is much to celebrate!

[box]

To follow happenings at the Fletcher Jones site and share memories and images, you can join the [We love the Silver Ball and Fletchers Gardens Facebook page here](#). [/box]



More than 100 people turned up for an impromptu tour inside the derelict Fletcher Jones factory. Image: Mitch Stansfield, Save the Silver Ball and Fletchers Gardens.